

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claims 1-15 (canceled)

Claim 16 (currently amended) A method of processing refunds online comprising the steps of:

accepting a purchase from a purchaser;

wherein said purchase is of postage ~~and wherein said purchase is evidenced by identifying information;~~

providing to a purchaser information based indicia evidencing said postage and a unique tracking number linked with said information based indicia;

accepting a refund request from said purchaser for said purchase ~~associated with said identifying information;~~

said step of accepting said refund request further comprising the steps of permitting said purchaser to:

log on to an online refund system;

provide to said online refund system information concerning said purchaser, including a user ID and a password; and

provide to said online refund system said unique tracking number ~~identifying information concerning said purchase;~~

verifying said refund request;

wherein said step of verifying said refund request includes the step of determining whether there has been a scan event associated with said postage;

wherein said step of verifying said refund request further includes the step of determining whether there has been a prior refund request associated with said purchase; and

wherein said step of verifying said refund request further includes the step of queuing said request for a period of time, and determining that no scan event occurs after submission of said refund request and during said period of time; and

said online refund system providing a refund for said purchase to said purchaser.

Claim 17 (canceled)

Claim 18 (currently amended) The method of claim ~~16~~ ~~17~~ wherein said identifying information further includes a transaction number further comprising:

accepting a purchase from a single purchaser of multiple items of postage, each evidenced by a single said information based indicia and a single said linked unique tracking number; and

providing to said single purchaser a transaction number linked with said multiple items of postage and common to said multiple items of postage purchased during said purchase.

Claim 19 (original) The method of claim 16 wherein said step of verifying said refund request includes the step of determining whether an undue period of time has passed from said purchase.

Claim 20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (currently amended) The method of claim ~~16~~ ~~20~~ wherein said period of time is seven days.

Claim 22 (original) The method of claim 16 wherein said step of verifying said refund request includes the step of determining whether said purchase for which a refund has been sought has previously been voided.

Claim 23 (original) The method of claim 16 further comprising the step of tracking an identity of a purchaser who submits a plurality of improper refund requests.

Claim 24 (original) The method of claim 16 further comprising the step of suspending purchase privileges of said purchaser who submits a plurality of improper refund requests.